

News Release

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April 5, 2011

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PINWR-11-04
11-047

Fish and Wildlife Service Announces New Manager for Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge *Former Tern Island Biotech Returns to What is Now Part of the Papahānaumokuākea Monument*

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is pleased to announce the selection of Susan D. Schulmeister as its new manager for the Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge within the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument.

The selection brings closure to an interesting family story. In the early 1980s, Sue worked as a biological science technician on Tern Island within French Frigate Shoals of the Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge. The refuge manager at the time was her husband, Bob. "Things have come full-circle," Schulmeister said upon her Midway appointment. "Not long after we left Tern, Bob gave up management in favor of a career in refuge maintenance. I decided to pursue my long-time goal to be a refuge manager. Now he is retiring and I will realize my goal."

Schulmeister will assume her new role on April 10, moving from her current position as a planner with the Service's Division of Conservation Planning and Policy in Homer, Alaska. She brings with her a wealth of refuge management, planning and biological expertise working on a diverse array of islands within the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge and lands of the Kenai and Izembek refuges in Alaska.

"We are pleased to have someone who knows how to deal with the full range of complex issues involved in managing a unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System," said Tom Edgerton, Service Superintendent of the Papahānaumokuākea Monument. "And Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge is truly unique among the more than 540 refuges in the System."

Schulmeister will assume responsibility for managing the Midway Atoll NWR, which includes Sand, Eastern and Spit Islands, about 1,200 miles northwest of Kaua'i in the main Hawaiian Islands. Her wealth of refuge management experience, combined with her leadership background and extensive time living and working in remote settings, make her an ideal fit for Midway.

"My time working with seabirds on coastal refuges, planning for the World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument in Alaska, and coordinating with the military and other entities have prepared me well for the responsibilities I'll have on Midway," Schulmeister said.

Former Navy service and experience in the Aleutian Islands will also help her manage a still-standing, historic military infrastructure with which she is familiar. "Both Bob and I will be right at home in the

remote, close-knit and uniquely special part of the Papahānaumokuākea Monument that is the Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge,” she said. “I am completely intrigued and excited about the challenges and opportunities this job will offer.”

Those challenges will include assessment, cleanup and recovery after the tsunami that struck the Refuge March 10-11, 2011.

Midway Atoll includes a small town, a fully certified airport offering emergency operations for commercial air traffic, and the Battle of Midway National Memorial. A small visitor program allows the public to learn about and experience the rich natural, cultural, and historic wonders that helped ensure the recent designation of the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument and its component parts, including the Midway and Hawaiian Islands refuges, as a World Heritage Site.

Schulmeister replaces the former Refuge Manager Matt Brown, who left Midway in May 2010.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov

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